

Statement to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
Washington, DC
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by
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NATIVE NATIONS INSTITUTE
FOR
LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND POLICY

The Native Nations Institute (NNI) serves as a self-determination, development, and self- governance resource to indigenous nations in the United States, Canada, and elsewhere. Its programs address the challenges of nation-building through:

- *Leadership and Management Programs* designed to train present and future leaders
- *Policy Analysis* on issues of critical importance to indigenous nations
- *Basic Research* on the foundations of self-determined economic and community development
- *Collaborative Relationships* with Native nations and organizations.

Founded by The University of Arizona and the Morris K. Udall Foundation, NNI is part of the Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, a research and outreach unit of the University. NNI is an outgrowth of the research and related work of the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development.

Background

The last two decades have seen a remarkable change in the governing and economic situations of American Indian nations. In the 1970s, the federal government moved to a policy of self-determination for Indian tribes. Assertive Indian nations have used the opportunity opened by this policy to take dramatically increased control of their own affairs, realizing in practice much of the sovereignty long recognized and promised in treaties, court decisions, and legislation.

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Stephen Cornell is Director of the Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy at The University of Arizona, where he also is Professor of Sociology and of Public Administration and Policy. He also serves as Co-Director of the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development. Dr. Cornell holds a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Chicago and has served on the sociology faculties at Harvard University and at the University of California, San Diego. He joined the Arizona faculty in 1998.

Such assertions, however, have posed major leadership, management, and policy challenges for Indian nations. Confronted with many of the same institutional, strategic, and administrative problems faced by most contemporary societies, many of these nations also confront burdensome legacies of colonialism. They are trying not only to rebuild productive economies but to maintain distinctive cultural practices, control and rechannel often destructive forces of change, and maintain a maximal degree of political autonomy within the sometimes hostile political atmosphere of the United States, where tribal sovereignty has been recurrently under attack over the last half century.

All too often, these nations face these complex tasks with only limited contemporary experience in sovereign government and meager informational and educational resources. Indian leaders often have to make momentous decisions without the benefit of the focused, customized educational experience that the leaders of other societies find readily available at leading educational institutions or through major executive education programs. Tribal governments also typically lack access to the kinds of policy analyses that other governments regularly employ in making major policy decisions. Indeed, tribal leaders have often called for access to the kinds of sophisticated policy resources that traditionally have been part of the decision-making processes of non-Indian governments in the United States and elsewhere.

The Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management, and Policy is a direct response to this need and to similar needs among First Nations in Canada and indigenous groups elsewhere in the world. Formally established by the State of Arizona Board of Regents in January 2001, NNI's purpose is to make available to Native nations comprehensive, professional training and development programs of the highest quality designed specifically to meet the educational needs of indigenous leadership and management, and to provide those nations and other policymakers with outstanding policy analysis and basic research presented in usable, accessible form. Its overall goal is to make a long-lasting, practical contribution to the effort of indigenous nations to improve the economic and social well-being of their peoples and regain effective control of their own futures.

Participating Organizations

The University of Arizona is both a land-grant institution and a front-rank research university located in a state with a substantial Native American population. It has major faculty resources focused on the needs of Indian nations and other indigenous peoples and a large, talented, and diverse group of Native American faculty located in a wide array of academic programs. The university has extensive experience with executive education programs, applied research, and community outreach. Its American Indian Studies Program is one of only two Ph.D.-granting Indian Studies program in the country and has the largest concentration of Indian faculty working in Indian Studies in the nation. The university also has a long history of involvement in Indian Country and a vigorous institutional commitment to serving Native nations. It is moving aggressively to expand and strengthen that commitment. NNI enjoys strong relationships with the university's American Indian Studies Program, Rogers College of Law, Eller College of Business and Public Administration, and Center for Native American Health in the College of Public Health.

The Morris K. Udall Foundation for Scholarship and Excellence in National Environmental Policy is an executive branch federal agency established by Congress in 1992 to honor Morris Udall's thirty years of service in the U.S. House of Representatives. The Foundation's activities echo Udall's concerns: the environment, Native American policy, and public policy conflict resolution. Its activities are supported by the interest accrued in a federal trust fund and by private sector contributions. The Foundation sponsors conferences, provides scholarships to students working on Native American policy topics, and runs the Native American Congressional Summer Internship program. The Foundation is committed to finding effective ways of supporting the educational and policy needs of Indian leadership.

NNI builds directly on fifteen years of research and education by the ***Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development***. Founded in 1987 at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, this is the most comprehensive effort ever undertaken to understand the sources and dynamics of economic and political success on American Indian reservations. Over the last decade, the Harvard Project has provided extensive applied research, *pro bono* consulting services, and management and leadership training to well over 100 American Indian tribes and Canadian First Nations. To date, its research program has produced the largest existing body of policy-relevant material of practical use to tribal leaders and managers and has completed more than 200 policy projects in response to requests from Indian nations and organizations. The Harvard Project and NNI share objectives and some staff and work closely together on numerous projects. Harvard Project research forms the intellectual foundation of NNI's educational programs.

Program Components

1. Leadership and Management Programs

NNI's leadership and management programs provide present and future indigenous leaders with customized, research-based education designed to respond directly to the demands of nation-building. These programs include:

- Executive education for senior Native leaders and managers through one-day to one-week-long, intensive sessions;
- Development of case-based curricular materials in governance and economic and community development for use by tribal colleges and other institutions;
- Leadership and entrepreneurship training for Native youth.

NNI's executive education programs are modeled on the kinds of executive education readily available to new members of Congress, Fortune 500 corporate executives, state legislators, and others through the nation's leading business and policy schools. The difference: NNI's executive education sessions are specifically designed to address the issues that Native leadership faces, and the content is grounded in the most extensive research on governance and development ever carried out in Indian Country.

The curricular focus in all of NNI's leadership and management programs is on nation-building and

leadership: the tasks of building-and leading--capable, healthy, and economically prosperous Native nations that control their own futures. Primary elements of the curriculum include: *Nation-Building*: the construction of effective institutions of self-government designed to meet the distinctive circumstances, needs, and priorities of Native nations; *Strategic Planning and Policymaking*: the tools needed to make informed, strategic policy decisions; *Administration/Management*: the "nuts and bolts" of getting things done; *External Relations*: the construction of productive relationships with federal and state/provincial governments and other constituencies with whom Native nations must deal to realize their own designs. The primary curricular concern is less with technical assistance--well supplied by other programs in other places--than with the foundational tasks of institutional, strategic, and policy development.

Leadership and Management Programs: Examples

- In Partnership with the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, NNI organized a two-day executive education program on "Leadership, Governance and Economic Policy" for the Navajo Nation Council, held in Flagstaff in early May. Under the sponsorship of Edward T. Begay, Speaker of the Council, NNI led more than 70 council delegates and tribal senior staff through a series of sessions on self-governance and business development.
- NNI led two days of discussions with the leaders of seventeen First Nations from the Yukon and British Columbia in Whitehorse, Yukon, in March. Topics included self-determination, governmental design, and development strategy. The sponsor was the Council of Yukon First Nations.
- In August, NNI will lead a week-long Native American Youth Entrepreneur Camp at The University Arizona to expose Native American high school juniors and seniors to the world of business and economic development on Indian lands and to help them develop entrepreneurial skills.
- NNI and the Harvard Project are collaborating on a book of case studies on tribal self-governance, enterprise development, and leadership titled *Resources for Nation-Building: Strategies, Cases, Tools for Indigenous Self-Determination*.

2. Policy Analysis

Indigenous nations today wrestle with classic problems of contemporary societies: how to build effective, sovereign governments; how to develop vigorous economies that fit their circumstances and cultures; how to solve difficult social problems; how to manage environment and natural resources; how to balance change and cultural integrity; how to achieve their own objectives in interaction with other governments; and so forth. Such problems present major policy challenges for Native nations, just as they do for other societies, yet these nations often lack the time, resources, or personnel necessary to analyze such issues adequately.

NNI's policy analysis component draws on Indian Country and university resources to help meet these challenges through rigorous research and analysis made accessible to Native nations. These analyses--initiated by Native nations and organizations or by NNI itself--are grounded in the experience of Native nations and directly involve Native communities.

Policy Analysis: Examples

- NNI has joined the National Congress of American Indians and the Kathryn M. Buder Center for American Indian Studies at Washington University, St. Louis, in preparing data and supporting documents for NCAI's use in discussions this coming fall on Congressional reauthorization of tribal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) programs. These organizations also are discussing a longer-term research project on TANF and tribal responses to welfare reform.
- At the request of the Arizona Indian Gaming Association (AIGA), NNI, through the Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy and in partnership with Lexecon Inc., and economics consulting firm, carried out a preliminary analysis of the impact of Indian gaming on the Arizona state economy. A more detailed analysis is under discussion with AIGA.

3. Basic Research

Since the late 1980s, the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development has carried out extensive research on indigenous self-governance and economic development. This research was occasioned by dramatic cases of sustained, self-determined economic development emerging across Indian Country, many of them not tied to the recent development of niche markets in gaming, and all of them standing in stark contrast to the widespread and seemingly entrenched legacy of reservation poverty. Through systematic, comparative research, the Harvard Project has shown conclusively (1) that indigenous nations can be successful at achieving sustainable development that follows their own designs, and (2) that the keys to successful development lie in genuine self-determination that is backed up by effective governing institutions that match indigenous political cultures. This research has become an important resource to Native nations both in the United States and elsewhere around the world.

NNI is continuing this research effort as well as the effort to widely disseminate the results among indigenous nations. Part of the purpose of this work is to contribute to the growing global dialogue about the necessary and sufficient conditions for economic growth and development. Indian Country is distinctive--but it also is representative in important ways of numerous communities around the world that languish in poverty. Our experience suggests that Indian Country research may find application in unexpected places. Today, both NNI and the Harvard Project field a growing number of inquiries from New Zealand, Australia, Africa and elsewhere about the success stories that some of North America's

indigenous peoples are beginning to be able to tell. Indeed, we are convinced that American Indian nations have development lessons to offer the world.

Basic Research: Examples

- Leadership is often talked about as a critical component in successful economic development, but there is little information in the policy or academic literatures on just what leadership most usefully does in the development context. NNI is engaged in a study of the role and limitations of leadership in economic development processes among indigenous peoples.
- In collaboration with the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, NNI is exploring links between self-determined economic development and the mitigation of social problems such as suicide.

4. Collaborative Relationships

NNI forms collaborative relationships with Native nations and organizations to advance nation-building processes, analyze policy options, promote strategic thinking, and develop solutions to difficult governance and development problems.

Collaborative Relationships: Examples

- The White Mountain Apache Tribe in Arizona has asked NNI's assistance in a strategic planning process, lasting from June through September, linked to the tribe's efforts to participate in certain federal programs. NNI will work closely with a steering committee composed of senior tribal managers and other citizens.
- The Ktunaxa-Kinbasket Tribal Council (KKTC) in British Columbia asked NNI to assist them in thinking through the challenges of organizing five First Nations in a single tribal council, occasioned in part by the ongoing British Columbia Treaty Process. NNI carried out research on the ground and then followed with a two-day workshop with KKTC leaders.
- NNI is in the process of negotiating collaborative relationships with two New Zealand institutions particularly concerned with Maori governance and development issues: one with the school of Maori and Pacific Development at the University of Waikato, and one with the Mira Szaszy Centre for Maori and Pacific Island Economic Development and the James Henare Maori Research Centre at the University of Auckland. The relationships will include promotion of cooperative research, sharing of data, and other joint efforts to provide services to indigenous nations.

Organization and Senior Staff

The Native Nations Institute is part of the Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, a research and outreach unit of The University of Arizona, organized under the Vice Presidency for Research and Graduate Studies.

The activities of NNI proceed in frequent consultation with an International Advisory Council composed of 23 Native leaders, professionals, educators, and tribal citizens from the United States and Canada. A list of Council members is included at the end of this document.

NNI senior staff include:

Manley A. Begay, Jr., Ed.D. (*Navajo*), Director

Joan Timeche, MBA (*Hopi*), Assistant Director

Miriam Jorgensen, Ph.D., Senior Policy Scholar

Stephen Cornell, Ph.D., Director, Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy

Funding

Start-up funding for NNI has come from the Ford Foundation, The University of Arizona, the Morris K. Udall Foundation, and other sources. Some funds also come from contracts for policy research and tuition for educational programs. NNI is currently involved in a major effort to raise additional funds.

NATIVE NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND POLICY

International Advisory Council

The NNI International Advisory Council meets three times a year.

Less formal consultation occurs on a continuing basis.

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| Co-Chair, George Bennett (Ottawa and Chippewa) Immediate past Chairman Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians Michigan | Skokomish Indian Tribe Washington |
| Co-Chair, Sophie Pierre (Kootenay) Chief St. Mary's First Nation Tribal Administrator Ktunaxa / Kinbasket Tribal Council British Columbia | Vernon James (Apache) Executive Director Health and Human Services San Carlos Apache Tribe Arizona |
| Lester Jack Briggs (Ojibwa) President Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College Minnesota | Willie Kaysulie (Yup'ik) Tribal Operations Specilaist Akiachak Native Village Alaska |
| Gregory Cajete (Santa Clara Pueblo) Professor of Education University of New Mexico | Edward Manuel (Tohono O'odham) Chainnan Tohono O'odham Nation Arizona |
| Duane Champagne (Turtle Mountain Chippewa) Professor and Director American Indian Studies Center University of California, Los Angeles | Elsie Meeks (Lakota) Executive Director Oweesta Corporation First Nations Development Institute South Dakota |
| Raymond Cross (Mandan-Hidatsa) Professor of Law University of Montana | Mike Mitchell (Mohawk) Grand Chief Akwasasne Mohawk First Nation Ontario |
| David Gipp (Lakota) President United Tribes Technical College North Dakota | Regis Pecos (Cochiti Pueblo) Governor Cochiti Pueblo New Mexico |
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